

**Statement for Representative Ron Kind**  
**The Pharmaceutical Market Access Act of 2003, HR 2427**  
**July 24, 2003**

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Pharmaceutical Market Access Act (HR 2427). Every day, seniors in western Wisconsin face the escalating cost of prescription drugs. A recent Families USA study found that the prices of the 50 drugs most commonly used by seniors increased by an average of three and a half times the rate of inflation over the past year. And between 2000 and 2003, seniors' expenditures on prescription drugs increased by 44 percent.

One solution for many Wisconsin residents is to drive to Canada where they can purchase prescription medication at a substantial savings compared to a drug store in the United States. On average, American consumers in 2002 were charged 38 percent more than consumers in Canada. A 38 percent savings is a sizable amount of money to an individual on a fixed income. HR 2427 would help all seniors realize this savings.

The legislation we are debating today is about inserting competition into drug pricing, to ensure that Americans no longer have to pay a 25 to 40 percent premium over the prices paid in other countries. As we embark on the largest entitlement expansion in recent history, \$400 billion, we must ensure that we get the best price for prescription medicines. We owe it to our taxpayers to ensure that they are getting the best bang for their buck.

The legislation before us would lower prescription drug costs for all American consumers by allowing the importation of drugs with appropriate safeguards. This legislation mandates that the Food and Drug Administration approve drugs and manufacturing facilities before reimportation. In addition, imported drugs must be packaged and shipped using approved counterfeit-resistant technologies.

As I travel around my district in western Wisconsin I consistently hear about the high cost of prescription medicines, not only from my seniors but also from businesses and average citizens. The Pharmaceutical Market Access Act is a significant step in the right direction to bring prescription drug costs down and ensure that all Americans have better access to affordable medicines. I urge my colleagues to support HR 2427.